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Creating Your Athame

Thu Apr 19 22:56:57 1990

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An athame is traditionally a double-bladed knife with a black handle. Very few people make their own, although it is possible to do so. Most people obtain one and personalize it in some way. This is most commonly done by inscribing symbols or runes on it. In some traditions specific symbols are required and have been handed down through their lineage. In others and among ecclectic Wicca groups, these can be personal.

How do you do this? You cover the blade with Parrafin. (WAX) Then you let it cool. Next you take a LONG sharp NAIL and inscribe the symbols in the wax. Then you use dilute Hydrochloric acid - careful, this stuff is dangerous, and drop by drop place on the blade where it shows through due to your inscriptions. When the acid has worked - usually fairly quickly - you rinse the blade under running water THOROUGHLY and then you use VERY hot water and a lot of elbow grease to remove the wax.

If ANY ACID FALLS ON THE SKIN RINSE THOROUGHLY UNDER COLD WATER IMMEDIATELY and if there is a burn of any type, seek immediate medical help. IF it gets in the eyes, again rinse immediately and completely and CALL THE EMT/PARAMEDIC UNITS. It is best when doing this if you wear either some type of glasses or goggles and rubber gloves.

DO NOT INGEST THE ACID OR LEAVE IT WHERE IT COULD BE INGESTED BY A CHILD OR ANIMAL. Also be careful of how you dispose of the rest of it - do so in an environmentally SAFE way.

This sounded like a little too much for me, so I tried another method. Koren made a beautiful athame for me and I personalized it by putting herbs of my choice in the handle and sealing this with a favorite crystal of mine - again with his help.

Oh, if you absolutely can't get a double-bladed knife - in Massechusetts, for example, possesion of such a weapon is a CRIME - get a single-bladed knife and grind down the other edge as much as you can.

As I said, the Athame is USUALLY black-handled, but there are exceptions - I saw one Lady use a knife with a deer's hoof for the handle. She was oriented toward her Native American heritage as much as her Craft, so it had deep significance for her. I also saw - in fact a friend of mine was selling it - a BEAUTIFUL homemade athame with copper tubing forming a cross hilt and crystals in each of the three tips for the handle. (this was almost a small sword) AS ALWAYS USE WHAT SPEAKS TO YOUR OWN SOUL!!!!!

The athame is usully NOT used in circle for anything other than ritual and ceremonial purposed. If you need to inscribe a candle for Magick or slice the bread for the cakes and wine part of the rite, you usually use a BOLINE or white - handled knife, often a small dagger or even a pen-knife, set aside for these purposes.

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Last modified: August 19 2018 14:56:48